

Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the year  
1898.

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To the Chairman and Members of the Seaton Urban  
District Council.

Gentlemen

There have been 20 births and 17 deaths. Three of the latter were visitors and are not reckoned in calculating the death rate, which is 10.7 per thousand of the resident population. This is a very low rate, and has only been reached twice in the last ten years.

Of the 14 deaths 7 were over 65 years of age, two being registered as from "old age" only. Of the others one was an infant of 2 days, born prematurely; three were children between 1 and 5, and the rest between 60 & 65.

The cause of death, as may be seen from the appended Tables, calls for no remark. There are none from any of notifiable Zymotics, and only one from any of the others; that from Influenza.

I have only had three notifications for the year, all of them Erysipelas, though having no connection with each other.

Influenza was prevalent in the Spring, and Whooping Cough and Chicken Pox in the late Autumn. All of these diseases were of a mild type, and no death resulted from either of the latter.

The sewerage system is in good working order. I have frequently inspected the main outfall and have never found any nuisance there. The Septic Tank at the small western outfall is satisfactory; I constantly pass by and consider that it has abated the nuisance which used to exist there.

The houses which were reported in April as having closets without flushing apparatus were promptly supplied.

The case of overcrowding in Hobbs Lane was duly remedied. Your Inspector of Nuisances has made monthly inspections of



the Slaughter houses, and finds they are kept clean and well lime-washed. I have visited them several times and find this to be correct. The surroundings of a slaughter house are, however, always more or less unsightly, and it is a pity that the one at the top of the town should be in such a conspicuous position.

We have an abundant supply of pure water, the quantity passing through the meter in the year was 16,246,000 gallons, which is equal to 44,509 gallons a day and represents a daily supply of 34 gallons per head of the population. A sample taken from the public drinking fountain was sent to the Clinical Research Association in February for bacteriological analysis, they reported it to be "a fairly good one, though it contains more organisms than an excellent water should contain. There is certainly no evidence of recent sewage contamination." I could in no way account for the presence of these organisms, and believe the cause was of a temporary nature.

In April a sample taken from the source of the water supply was sent to Dr Bernard Dyer for analysis. He reported "This is a pure water showing no signs of animal contamination."

At the time this sample was taken I visited the springs at Couchill with Mr Chamier, and as I then reported, found everything satisfactory.

Complaints were made last August, by the occupiers of some of the houses on the higher level that their supply was frequently interrupted. Mr Martin, Engineer, of Exeter was called on to advise how this could be remedied. Together with the Chairman and other members of the Council I accompanied him to Couchill, and have since furnished him with data he required. His report has not yet been received, but may be expected shortly. I understand that the owner of the springs contemplates supplying the eight houses on his estate, which at present are connected with the main that supplies Seaton, by a separate pipe. If this is done I think the grievance complained of will be remedied.



Summing up my report I am glad to be able to say:-

"The health of the district has been good and the death rate (10.7) is exceptionally low".

"The sewerage system is in good working order".

"The scavenging is efficient".

"The water supply is abundant and pure".

I cannot conclude without expressing my regret in common with most Medical Officers of Health, at the passing of the "New Vaccination Act". Vaccination has been efficiently performed in this district, and during the 34 years I have resided here I have only seen one case of Small-pox. I very much fear that if the exemptions allowed by the New Act are much adopted, it will not be long before we have this scourge in our midst. Hitherto the need of a <sup>h</sup> Isolation Hospital has not been great; but under the working of this Bill it may at any time become an urgent necessity.

I am Gentlemen

Your obedient servant

H. A. Patterson

M. O. H.

Seaton 1<sup>st</sup> February 1899.



Deaton Urban District Council

Report of M. G. H. for

the year 1898.